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March 20, 1979

Dr. Hugh Pratt  
Medical Building  
Brookhaven National Laboratory  
Upton, New York 11973

Dear Dr. Pratt,

I am a former Peace Corps volunteer who spent two years on Utirik Atoll in the Marshall Islands. At present, I am doing preparatory research for my doctoral dissertation in socio-cultural anthropology, particularly in relation to the ways in which the radioactive fallout has affected the Islanders. It is in this sense that I am writing you.

First of all, I would like to invite you to participate in a symposium I have been asked to chair for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in San Francisco during January of 1980 for that organization's annual meeting.

The title of the symposium is "Ethno-Epidemiology: The Marshall Islanders Twenty-Five Years After Exposure to Radiation." I propose to discuss the radiological findings--both short and long-term in the exposed Marshallese populations, and especially in relation to the enigmatic properties of the radioiodines. As resident physician in the Marshalls under the aegis of Brookhaven, you would be able to relate firsthand knowledge concerning the ongoing problems facing the Marshallese, and your presence at this symposium would greatly benefit those in attendance.

Aside from yourself, I have invited Dr. Conard, who has headed the Marshalls study over the years, and do hope that he will be able to participate in the symposium. I have also invited the following people: Dr. Frank von Hippel, a physicist from the Department of Environmental Sciences at Princeton University who specializes in radiation science; Dr. Helen Caldicott, a pediatrician from Boston Children's Hospital who has expertise in radiation-induced pathologies; Dr. John Gofman, a chemist from the UC Lawrence Radiation Laboratory who specializes in radiation science; and Dr. Konrad Kotrady from the University of Utah Medical School, who formerly worked in the Marshalls under Brookhaven. I have also invited an anthropologist--Dr. Robert Kiste from the University of Hawaii--to participate in order to provide the symposium with ethnographic information concerning Marshallese

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society and culture.

It is my intention, and thus the cross-disciplinary nature of the symposium participants, to discuss the manifold ways in which the fallout has affected this unique island population, and the numerous problems encountered over the years in relation to data collection, and especially interpretation.

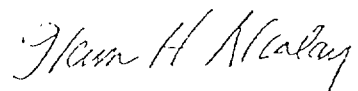
In addition, the symposium will examine the ecological effects (if any . . .), and the ways in which Marshallese culture has been touched by the ongoing radiological problems. It was my experience that there existed a monumental chasm between the Marshallese perspective (or "emic" in anthropological terms), and the perspective maintained by the U.S. doctors (or "etic"), and it might be fruitful to explore these differing perspectives in order to ultimately improve the medical treatment of the people. In that sense, I would hope that my research and eventual dissertation will benefit both the Marshallese and the Brookhaven team.

In that context, I have another request: Is there any possibility that I might accompany you aboard the "Liktañur" during the June survey? The opportunity to visit the Marshalls with your team would be invaluable for my research, and I would also appreciate the chance to see my friends on Utirik once again. I realize that space aboard your ship is at a premium, but I am actually not very large in stature, and would neatly fit into the smallest space. Additionally, I would expect to pay for all of the expenses associated with such a venture. Please let me know how you feel about this.

Also, I would very much appreciate hearing from you about the present state of the exposed (and non-exposed) Marshallese. Anything you can convey would be appreciated.

Well, Dr. Pratt, I am looking forward to hearing from you in the near future, and wish you the best of luck in the Marshalls. And please pass on a "Yokwe Kom" to my friends on Utirik!

Sincerely yours,



Glenn H. Alcalay

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